



OESNEWS

Governor's Office of Emergency Services

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Statement by State OES Director Henry Renteria on FEMA's Denial of OES Appeal Seeking Assistance for Homeowners, Renters, Business Owners Affected by February Storms

On Thursday, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) advised the Governor's Office of Emergency Services (OES) that it has denied OES's appeal of FEMA's decision in June denying California's request for federal assistance on behalf of homeowners, renters and business owners in Kern, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego and Ventura counties affected by the February 16-23 storms. In response, OES Director Henry Renteria issued the following statement:

"We are disappointed by FEMA's decision to deny our appeal of its earlier decision not to make homeowners, renters and business owners affected by the February 16-23 storms eligible for loans and grants.

February's storms destroyed or significantly damaged more than 260 homes and resulted in some level of damage to at least 1300 homes. Nearly six months after the storms, many of those homes remain uninhabitable.

We had hoped that FEMA would understand the significant burden February's storms, the January storms, the 2003 Southern California firestorms and other recent events have placed on local governments, homeowners, renters and business owners.

There were more residential structures in Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside and San Diego counties classified as "destroyed" or as having "major damage" after February's storms than after January's.

We remain committed to obtaining all the federal assistance we believe Californians are eligible for under the law and will be reviewing all available options to obtain that assistance, including a request for implementation of the United States Small Business Administration's disaster loan program."

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Editor's Note: For additional comments regarding OES's reaction to FEMA's decision not to make emergency loans and grants available to Californians affected by February's storms, please contact Greg Renick at (626) 431-3646.

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